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RESIDENTS HIT OIL SITE MESS

Dirty Oil Well Sites Hit by South Torrance Home Owners, Demand Clean-up

Protests against "Shanty Town" aspects of South Torrance's oil well district were raised by residents this week even while the City Council is getting ready to adopt a stronger law aimed at cleaning up the area.

At the same time the Torrance Press learned of two open holes, filled with water and petroleum ooze, which pose a danger to youngsters.

One of them, a cellar of an abandoned well, contains several feet of water and is entirely uncovered. This one is located in a field south of 236th St. between Eshelman and Walnut Aves.

The other hole, smaller and containing greasy fluid, is located on the northwest corner of 235th St. and Eshelman Ave.

The open hole is surrounded by ooze which sinks under one's feet. This site is located not too far from the Howard Wood School.

In the meantime, Harold F. La Mour, president of the South Torrance Home Owners Association, said the messy oil situation will be open for discussion at the organization's May 25 meeting.

He also said that a new law being readied for City Council action should have definite enforcement responsibility provisions so that it has "teeth" in it.

Meanwhile, Mrs. C. G. Mallory, of 2468 West 236th St., charged that protests about an unsightly oil property across the street from her home, filed more than 18 months ago, have resulted in no action from the city.

She asserted that although the City Council had ordered a cleanup of trash and barrels and old storage tanks, the property looks as messy as ever.

Mrs. Mallory said that although the owners had been ordered to replace a fence which was easy to get through, the fence had not been replaced, but only two strands of barbed wire had been strung across the top.

"You can still go through it any place," she said. "All we want is for them to clean it up. It's a shame to live there."

She termed the property "a disgrace to the city."

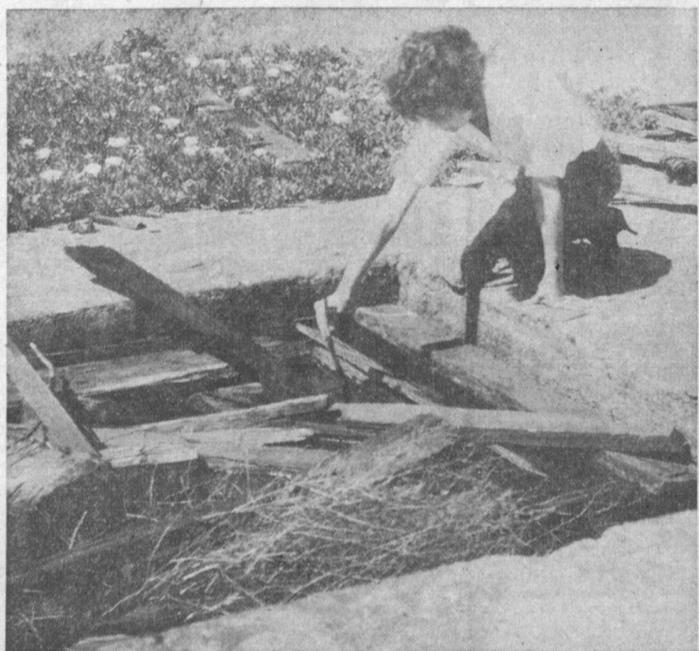
"When they named Torrance the All-American City, I bet they never brought the committee down here," she declared.

Another resident, Mrs. Ben Kendall of 23800 Eshelman Ave., said she had received a "run-around" from city officials when she attempted to have some of the unsightly oil sites cleaned up.

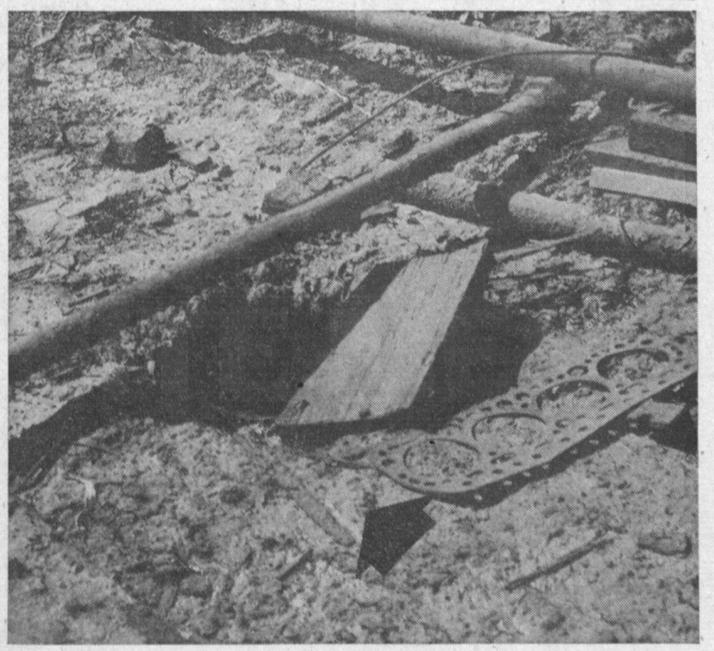
"All we ask is that they clean it up. Fell the old derricks and paint. We won't object to the oil wells," she declared.

She said that when she bought her home five years ago, she was informed the city had an ordinance to control a cleanup. But when she inquired about enforcement, she could get no action from city officials.

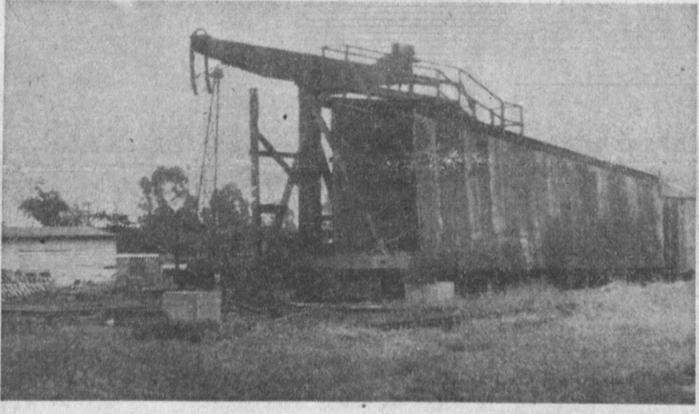
"We try to have our home look like something, but when people come to see us, we are ashamed of the dirty, messy, greasy machinery left out," Mrs. Kendall said.



OPEN HOLE—This open cellar, which once was covered by an oil well poses a hazard to children who might fall into several feet of water. The structure is eight feet deep, and a child easily could drown in it.



DANGER SPOT—A cement lined hole with no cover stands as an inviting hazard on the north west corner of 235th St. and Eshelman Ave. Area around former well site is covered by oily ooze, which sinks underfoot.



UNSIGHTLY STRUCTURES—Old sheds, tanks and equipment are subject of complaint of neighbors who charge that little effort has been made to clean up site despite a City Council order 18 months ago. The site is at Crenshaw Blvd. and 236th St. —Press Photos

Feds Charge Flyer

Anderson Tells Progress of San Diego Freeway Building

Acquisition of property for the San Diego Freeway through Torrance is moving along rapidly but will not be completely purchased for another fiscal year.

That was the statement Thursday night of Lt. Gov. Glenn Anderson when he briefed the Inter-City Highway Committee on progress of the super highway in the South Bay area.

Anderson said he had received the latest information on progress of the freeway only that morning before he attended the dinner meeting in the Palms Restaurant.

He did not, however, confirm or deny the statement of Councilman J. A. Beasley, Torrance representative, that the San Diego Freeway through Torrance should be completed in late 1963.

Construction Work

Anderson made these points on progress of the freeway:

Plans are nearly complete for \$2,500,000 of structures between Manchester Ave. and Vesta St. in Inglewood.

A section between Venice Blvd. and Jefferson Blvd. in the Culver City area will be completed early next year.

The 1.3-mile section between Long Beach Freeway and Alameda St. will go to bid this August.

The first of several contracts for structures between Studebaker Road and east of Long Beach Freeway will be awarded this summer.

Bids will be called next month for 3.5 miles of landscaping between Matteson Ave. and Wilshire Blvd.

Work is under way on the freeway in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Late Information

As far as rights-of-way are concerned on the section between Imperial Hwy. and the Harbor Freeway, Anderson made a report of latest information.

He said that between Imperial Hwy. and Rosecrans Ave., 50 per cent of the parcels have been purchased and 54 per cent appraised.

Between Rosecrans and Hawthorne Blvd., 15 per cent has been purchased and 25 per cent appraised.

All acquisitions will be completed by November, 1960.

Pilot Faces Complaint on Low Flying

A complaint charging careless and reckless operation and flying below minimum standards will be filed against the pilot of a plane which crashed into a South Torrance backyard two weeks ago.

That was the announcement of Frank Allen, investigator for the Federal Aviation Agency, which has probed the case together with Torrance police officers.

Allen said he found no evidence that Aubrey Devenish, 41, deliberately tried to crash his Cessna into the home of his wife, Josephine, at 2098 Middlebrook Road. The plane crashed into a backyard at 2971 Middlebrook Road, less than 100 yards from there.

Devenish denied to investigators that he attempted to crash into this wife's home.

The veteran pilot, an electronic engineer, said that an object struck the windshield of his plane while he was flying back to Torrance Municipal Airport and that he lost control.

Allen said that he found no evidence to back up this statement.

He said that the regional board of the federal agency will decide on the basis of his complaint whether to suspend or revoke Devenish's license and that the private pilot will be given an opportunity to offer his version of the crash at a hearing.

Allen said that Devenish will be cited for flying below the minimum altitude above a congested area, which is set at 1000 feet.

New Oil Ordinance Delayed

Introduction of a new oil well ordinance will not be made for another two weeks to permit oil industry spokesmen to make suggestions to City Attorney Stanley Remelmeyer.

But at a conference Thursday, in which that delay was granted, Mayor Albert Isen warned that: "I don't want this pigeon-holed in committees."

Two representatives of drillers announced they had no objections in general to the new legislation, which will cut down the drilling area and provide for removal of old wooden derricks.

"We have no quarrel in principle. We just want to make sure that the ordinance means what it says," announced Louis S. Chappellear Jr., field representative of the Western Oil and Gas Association.

Change Wording

Richard Fenton, an official of the California Stripper Well Association, also said he wants to make only changes in wording.

Fenton did insist, however, that only derricks which are structurally unsound should be removed, since to single the structures out only because of their appearance "is discriminatory."

But Remelmeyer argued that if the city wanted to, it could go farther than this ordinance and order painting and landscaping on oil well sites, and test the legality in court, just on beautification grounds. The new ordinance does not have these requirements.

Housekeeping

Planning Director George Powell said that he has not received complaints against oil wells as such, but only objections to "improper housekeeping."

(Continued on page two)

Sale of Narbonne Defended

"Nobody is putting anything over on anybody."

That was the assertion made today by Harold F. La Mour, spokesman for South Torrance property owners who want to sell the Narbonne Ranch Water Co. to the Dominguez Water Co.

The proposal ran into some doubts at the City Council meeting Tuesday, when it ordered the terms of the proposed sale of the smaller company be submitted before it gives approval to the transaction.

LaMour, who is vice-president of the Narbonne Mutual Water Co., as well as president of the South Torrance Home Owners Association, brushed aside the suggestion that residents will have to pay for any improvements made to their system, no matter who takes over the company.

Water Rate

This belief was expressed by Councilman Robert Jahn, who also claims that the improvements cannot be made without an increase in the water rate.

LaMour said that the Dominguez sale would actually result in a cash payment to shareholders of Narbonne in return for turning over their stock to Dominguez.

"We are not getting something for nothing," he argued. "Our company has a value to them."

PUC Control

He also said that property owners will not be charged anything for improvements to the pipes. Furthermore, he pointed out, the State Public Utilities Commission sets the rates for Dominguez and that water users could not be "gouged" by the firm.

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Driver in Hot Water in Car Wash Tub

While admiring the personal hygiene involved, a policeman thought that a private bathroom in an auto was not quite the proper thing.

Particularly if an upturned wash tub was the only seat inside the car.

Officer T. O. Arnold said that after he chased an auto driven by Dennis Robert Peck, 20, of 15522 Cordary Ave., Lawndale, for a mile and clocked it at 60 m.p.h., he finally stopped it at 174th St. and Atkinson Ave.

To his surprise, he found that the car did not contain either front or rear seats, and Peck was perched on top of the tub, which was not fastened to the floor.

Peck was cited into court May 29 on charges of speeding, no tail or license lights, no stop lights and driving an unsafe vehicle.

Sagrillo to Head Welteria Group

Richard Sagrillo, an insurance man, will be installed as president of the Welteria Businessmen's Association Saturday in the Fish Shanty Restaurant. He will succeed Herbert F. Jackson.

Other new officers to be installed are Dr. Wilmet Labit, vice-president; Frank Hunter, recording secretary, and John Chiodano, financial secretary.

Sagrillo resides at 24474 Winlock Drive.

No Red Tape Here, Council Changes Street

If a company does not like the name of the street where it wants to locate, City Councilmen have no objections to change it.

This was indicated Tuesday, when they learned Ken-Tile Co. does not like the name Bush Ave., which will be its address.

"Let's show them that it doesn't take a lot of red tape to get things done around here," said Mayor Albert Isen. He advocated the street be changed to California Ave.

Although Councilman George Bradford plugged for Texas Ave., California will be the name to be suggested to the firm.

Two streets in the area near the civic center have already been named for States. They are Alaska and Hawaii Aves.

Library Site in Civic Center Gets Priority

A civic center library will have a high place on the priority list for development of the site, the City Council decided Tuesday.

They took this action after William J. Hanson, chairman of the Library Commission asked that space between the Benstead pool and the court house be reserved for the main library.

"I don't want to torpedo the library, but space should be reserved for the expansion of the court house," City Attorney Stanley Remelmeyer pointed out.

But councilmen said they believed there is enough space for future Superior Courts available. They also noted that funds will be allocated for an architect to prepare plans for the complete development of the civic center.



DISCUSS FREEWAY—Chatting informally at Inter-City Highway Committee during which Lt. Gov. Glenn Anderson gave progress report on San Diego Freeway, are, from left, Wilburn E. Baker, committee chairman; Anderson, Mrs. Anderson and Torrance Councilman J. A. Beasley, this city's representative to committee. —Press Photo

Council to Meet with ECC Board

A meeting with trustees of El Camino College has been requested by the City Council in order to forestall the condemnation of a 14-acre parcel to the college.

El Camino recently announced intentions of condemning land on the south side of Redondo Beach Blvd. for use of a parking lot.

Torrance councilmen have expressed opposition on grounds the land should be developed as a shopping center and not lost to the tax rolls.

ADVANCE BOARD MEET

The Board of Education of the Torrance Unified School District will meet tomorrow instead of Tuesday at 8 p. m.